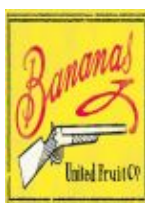




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REVOLUTION IN HONDURAS AND AMERICAN BUSINESS: THE QUINTESSENTIAL “BANANA REPUBLIC”



The first decades of the twentieth century were a time of political and economic change. In 1899, the first boatload of bananas was shipped from Honduras to the United States. The fruit found a ready market, and the trade grew rapidly. The American-based banana companies constructed railroad lines and roads to serve the expanding banana production. Perhaps even more significant, Honduras began to attract the attention of the U.S. government. Until the early twentieth century, the U.S. played only a very limited role in internal Honduran political clashes. With its investments growing, however, the U.S. showed increased concern over Honduras’s political instability. Although United States marines never occupied Honduras as they did neighboring Nicaragua, the U.S. frequently dispatched warships to waters near Honduras as a warning that intervention in Honduras was indeed a possibility if American business interests were threatened or domestic conflict escalated.

Date Range: 1910-1930

Content: 24,489 images

Source Library: U.S. National Archives

Detailed Description:

Honduras is the "standard" for a "banana republic" having been O. Henry’s model. This collection would detail both the political and financial machinations of the fruit companies, but also the graft and corruption of the national government, the American banking community’s loans, the U.S. government’s response and the various aborted popular/revolutionary uprisings. The largest single group of records relates to Honduran political affairs; pertaining chiefly to the turbulent political situation and almost continuous revolutionary activity in Honduras. Included are discussions of boundary disputes and border troubles with EL Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala and revolutionary movements originating from these neighboring countries and from Mexico; German activities in Honduras in World War I; landing of U.S. Marines to protect U.S. citizens during revolutions; cases of alleged violation of neutrality laws, and shipment of arms and munitions to Honduras from the U.S.; the

participation of Sumner Welles in a conference to mediate the revolution in 1924; and presidential campaigns and elections. Another large group of records relates to financial affairs and concerns such matters as the proposed adjustment of the Honduran debt by the United States, loan negotiations and agreements between the Republic of Honduras and the J. P. Morgan Co. and other banking groups in the U.S., re-funding of the internal debt of Honduras, settlement of Honduras' foreign debt, and loans to the Government of Honduras by various fruit companies.